

IN HER FOOTSTEPS

We have been told the secret of happiness is finding: finding yourself, finding love, finding the right job. Jane believed the secret of happiness was in "losing," that we should "throw ourselves into God as a little drop of water into the sea, and lose ourselves indeed in the ocean of the Divine Goodness." She advised a man who wrote to her about all the afflictions he suffered "to lose all these things in God. These words produced such an effect in the soul, that he wrote me that he was wholly astonished, and ravished with joy."

Today, when any thoughts or worries come to mind, send them out into the ocean of God's love that surrounds you and lose them there. If any feelings come into your heart — grief, fear, even joy or longing, send those out into the ocean of God's love. Finally, send your whole self, like a drop, into God. There is no past no future, here or there. ***There is only the infinite ocean of God.***

*(excerpted from: www.catholic.org)

PRAYER

Lord, you chose Saint Jane Frances
to serve you both in marriage and in religious life.

By her prayers help us to be faithful
in our vocation and always to be the light of the world.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Your Son, who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.
Amen

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Saint Jane Frances de Chantal

Feast Day: August 21 (Latin Calendar)



PATRON OF:
FORGOTTEN PEOPLE, IN-LAW PROBLEMS,
LOSS OF PARENTS,
PARENTS SEPARATED FROM CHILDREN AND WIDOWS.

SAINT JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL

*What a way to start a marriage! Jane no sooner arrived at her new home then she discovered she might lose it. Her husband, Christophe, had not only inherited the title of baron but enormous debts as well.

But Jane had not come to the marriage empty-handed. She brought with her a deep faith instilled by her father who made daily religious discussion fun, allowing the children to talk about anything — even controversial topics. She also brought a good-hearted way that made a friend comment, "Even stupid jokes were funny when she told them."

These qualities helped the twenty-year-old French woman take charge by personally organizing and supervising every detail of the estate, a method which not only brought the finances under control but won her employees' hearts as well.

Despite the early financial worries, she and her husband shared "one heart and one soul." They were devoted to each other and to their four children.

One way Jane shared her blessings was by giving bread and soup personally to the poor who came to her door. Often people who had just received food from her would pretend to leave, go around the house and get back in line for more. When asked why she let these people get away with this, Jane said, "What if God turned me away when I came back to him again and again with the same request?"

Her happiness was shattered when Christophe was killed in a hunting accident. Before he died, her husband forgave the man who shot him, saying to the man, "Don't commit the sin of hating yourself when you have done nothing wrong." The heartbroken Jane, however, had to struggle with forgiveness for a long time. At first she tried just greeting him on the street. When she was able to do that, she invited him to her house. Finally she was able to forgive the man so

completely that she even became Godmother to his child.

These troubles opened her heart to her longing for God and she sought God in prayer and a deepening spiritual life. Her commitment to God impressed Saint Francis de Sales, the bishop who became her director and best friend. Their friendship started before they even met, for they saw each other in dreams, and continued in letters throughout their lives.

With Francis' support, Jane founded the Visitation order for women who were rejected by other orders because of poor health or age. She even accepted a woman who was 83 years old. When people criticized her, she said, "What do you want me to do? I like sick people myself; I'm on their side." She believed that people should have a chance to live their calling regardless of their health.

Still a devoted mother, she was constantly concerned about the materialistic ways of one of her daughters. Her daughter finally asked her for spiritual direction as did many others, including an ambassador and her brother, an archbishop. Her advice always reflected her very gentle and loving approach to spirituality:

"Should you fall even fifty times a day, never on any account should that surprise or worry you. Instead, ever so gently set your heart back in the right direction and practice the opposite virtue, all the time speaking words of love and trust to our Lord after you have committed a thousand faults, as much as if you had committed only one. Once we have humbled ourselves for the faults God allows us to become aware of in ourselves, we must forget them and go forward."

Saint Jane died in 1641, at sixty-nine years of age.